

Ashleworth C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy



Introduction

At Ashleworth C of E primary school, our Attendance Policy is designed to promote outstanding attendance for all pupils across the school. We understand that there is a proven link between attendance and academic and social outcomes for our pupils. It is the desired outcome of this policy that it supports the development of our pupils into academically successful young people of god character with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

This policy reflects the guidance set out in “Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities” published by the Department for Education in September 2014. It also takes account of key legislation including:

- The Education Act 1996 – section 434 (1) (3)(4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2013

Furthermore, this policy complies with the Gloucestershire County Council Penalty Notice Protocol which, under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, empowers designated LA officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school (as from February 2004).

See <http://gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/attendance-and-absence-from-school/> for more information.

This policy also takes due regard to all the requirements of the Human Rights act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

Aim:

At Ashleworth C of E Primary School, we expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.

It is our duty to strive to achieve 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. It is our aim that we support all our pupils so that they can continue to attend school even though they may be facing challenging personal circumstances.

We expect that:

- Every staff member accepts responsibility for promoting and encouraging 100% attendance;
- All staff are consistent in their approach to attendance and work within the framework set out in this policy and liaise closely with the Headteacher to ensure good attendance;
- Every pupil is made aware of the importance of attendance through lessons and assemblies where our high expectations are set out;
- Every parent and carer accepts the shared responsibility for their child's regular and punctual attendance at school.

The Attendance policy will ensure:

- that all pupils will be supported in their right to enjoy and access a broad and balanced curriculum;
- that pupils are recognised for 100% attendance and judiciously supported when their attendance is not good;
- that all staff across the school will work together within a clearly defined framework to challenge poor attendance and to support good or outstanding attendance.

Rationale

We believe that all our pupils have the potential to achieve at or beyond their indicated potential and we endeavour to provide an environment where ALL pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a major part in making our school successful. Every child has the right to access the education he/she is entitled to. This policy seeks to ensure that parents and staff share the responsibility for supporting and promoting 100% school attendance and punctuality for all.

We understand that research indicates that;

- there is a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%;
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. We believe that high attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Policy in Practice

This policy reflects the fact that school cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances (see Appendix for Leave of Absence Request Form). The Department for Education DfE has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences. These include;

- a child is ill or receiving medical treatment;
- days of religious observance, notified in advance;
- absences due to family circumstances e.g. bereavement, serious illness;
- other absences, such as approved sporting activities can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; professional discretion will need to be used in these cases as to whether the absence can be authorised.

As a school, we believe that the work to promote 100% attendance for all our pupils is also rooted in high quality pastoral care. The Headteacher, and all staff, seek to identify early issues that will affect pupil's attendance and work in partnership with parents and pupils to support attendance.

As a school, we reward 100% attendance while challenging and supporting pupils whose attendance could be better.

Indicative Actions for Attendance – aim 100%

- Regular analysis of attendance
- Reward given for 100% attendance every term
- Voucher for 100% attendance for the whole of the academic year

Indicative Actions for Attendance causing concern

- The Headteacher and Administrator identify any unusual patterns of attendance and make personal contact with families of pupils whom the school has concerns about.
- Letters of concern and support may be sent to parents and they may be invited in to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting.
- A formal letter of warning and the option of a referral to the Local Authority for legal action for unauthorised periods of absence over 10 sessions.

The school will ensure that it fulfils its legal obligation to register pupils every morning at 8.50 and every afternoon at 1.00pm

It is the expectation of the school that all pupils attend registration and lessons on time every day. All pupils arriving to school in the morning should register with their teacher at 8.50 and again, in the afternoon, at 1.00pm. The punctual attendance of each pupil will be recorded using the following protocol;

- when a pupil is present when the register is opened at 8.50am and 1.00pm they receive a present mark (/);
- when a pupil arrives after the register is closed, they are late and should be marked with a late mark (L);
- the school office will formally close the registers at 9.05 and any pupil arriving after this will receive a late after registration mark (U)

The school expects absences to be kept to a minimum; routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

Children Missing in Education CME

At Ashleworth C of E Primary School, we follow the LA guidance on CME and Missing Pupils published in January 2017.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'.

We would action the CME referral process for the following reasons:

- A child has stopped attending school and no contact can be made with the parent/s to establish a reason for the absence;
- A child has ceased to attend school and forwarding address/new school is not known;
- A child has not returned from holiday within 10 school days of the expected date of return. In these cases, we would attempt to establish the whereabouts of the family within 10 school days before making a referral to the Access to Education team.

Roles and responsibilities

We believe the responsibility for the attendance of all pupils is shared between the pupil, parents/carers and school.

Parents will:

- make all reasonable efforts to ensure their child attends school 100% of the time and arrives punctually to school;
- inform the school on the first day of their child's absence, and on every subsequent day of absence, of the reason for the absence and, where appropriate, supply a medical certificate or other evidential paperwork as requested;
- inform the school of any unavoidable medical or dental appointments during school time in advance of any consequent absence.

Teachers will:

- mark registers accurately;
- maintain awareness of prior and current Persistent Absentees and liaise closely with the Headteacher to pick up any attendance issues for pupils or groups of pupils;
- reinforce positive messages about attendance;
- use assemblies to reinforce the messages and to praise good attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher will:

- liaise with the LA with regards to patterns of attendance;
- formulate the strategic response to attendance issues across the school;
- analyse attendance data to identify trends, areas of improvement and areas needed improvement;
- investigate strategies to improve attendance of all pupils at the school;
- will ensure the school follows the DfE guidelines and ensure the legal obligations are met in regard to all matters of attendance.

Governors will:

- review attendance on a regular basis;
- hold the school to account for the level of attendance in school and have an overview of the policy and procedures in dealing with attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation

Governors on an annual basis will review our Attendance Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

In all aspects of our work at Ashleworth C of E primary school, the safety and well-being of our children is paramount. We expect all staff, visitors and volunteers to share in this commitment.